

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 21

By Trail

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Chancellor Whitney Stegall, Senior, on the occasion of his 87th birthday.

WHEREAS, It is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pay tribute to those citizens who are celebrating special occasions in their estimable lives; and

WHEREAS, Whitney Stegall, Senior, will celebrate his 87th birthday on February 17, 2003, a milestone that will be commemorated as yet another precious souvenir of life's rich pageant; and

WHEREAS, One of four children born to Benjamin Duggan and Nannie May (Love) Stegall, he was raised in Rockvale, where he attended elementary and high school; and

WHEREAS, Upon his graduation from high school, Mr. Stegall matriculated at Middle Tennessee State College (now University), from which he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1937; and

WHEREAS, Along with fellow alumnus Randy Wood ('41), administrator and fellow alumnus Homer Pittard ('36), and administrators Quill E. Cope and Nathaniel Craig Beasley, Whitney Stegall, Senior, was a founding member of the Middle Tennessee State University Foundation in 1961; dedicated to development, the MTSU Foundation was the first such organization instituted at a regional university; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stegall subsequently taught school in Smyrna and coached the girls' basketball team until he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps as a teacher; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stegall enlisted in the United States Army during the Second World War, and was stationed in the Pacific Theater; he proudly served his country from 1942-1947 and attained the rank of Major; and

WHEREAS, He selflessly and heroically saved the lives of his fellow soldiers during a gasoline explosion in New Guinea, carrying out a valiant rescue during which he was so badly burned that he was sent to Valley Forge Army Hospital for eighteen months of treatment and plastic surgery; and

WHEREAS, For such valor, Mr. Stegall was awarded the Soldier's Medal, an honor given for bravery not associated with combat; and

WHEREAS, Upon completion of his military duty, Whitney Stegall, Senior, attended the Vanderbilt University School of Law, earning his LL.B. in 1950; and

WHEREAS, Following his graduation from Vanderbilt and in collaboration with fellow Vanderbilt alumnus Dick LaRoche, he established a law firm in Murfreesboro; Stegall and LaRoche would grow into a substantial practice; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Stegall has served the State of Tennessee in a number of capacities; he ably represented the people of DeKalb, Rutherford, Cannon, Van Buren, and White Counties as a State Senator in the 84th General Assembly, serving from 1965-1967; and

WHEREAS, He also served as Chancellor of the 16th Judicial District, composed of Rutherford and Cannon Counties, for two eight-year terms, from his election in 1974 until his retirement in 1990; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Stegall served with passionate commitment to make this historic Court of Equity nothing less than exactly that, a court in which equity was the right of every man, woman, and child, no matter what their circumstances or stations in life, and the people appearing before his court were well-served by Chancellor Stegall's devotion to his duties on the bench and his insistence upon fairness and equity under the law for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stegall had become such a respected member of the Tennessee State Judiciary that, soon after his retirement, he was asked by Governor Ned McWherter to serve as an interim Circuit Court Judge until a new judge could be elected. He served this unexpired term from July, 1993 until August 31, 1994; and

WHEREAS, In his ceaseless dedication to the law, Chancellor Whitney Stegall continues to work in the law practice of David Bragg and Rick Mansfield in Murfreesboro; and

WHEREAS, He serves his fellow man as a member of numerous organizations, including the Kiwanis Club, which he has served as Lieutenant-Governor of the Kentucky-Tennessee District; the Free and Accepted Masons; and the American, Rutherford County, and Cannon County Bar Associations; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Stegall also serves his God as a devout member of the First United Methodist Church in Murfreesboro; and

WHEREAS, Whitney Stegall, Senior, is a man highly dedicated to his family; he married Orene Cowan, now dearly departed, on December 29, 1956, and the couple raised two children: Whitney Stegall, Junior, who works as an investor and lives with his wife and three children in Brentwood, and Amy Stegall Swartz, who lives with her husband and two children in Tulsa, where she works as a physical therapist; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his years of service to the State of Tennessee and all her people, Chancellor Stegall has proven himself to be a gifted attorney, dedicated jurist, consummate gentleman, and loyal citizen, earning the praise of friends and colleagues such as Representative John Bragg, who describes Mr. Stegall as "undefeated as far as integrity is concerned"; and

WHEREAS, We wish to grasp this golden opportunity to specially recognize one of Tennessee's most outstanding citizens on this very special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby honor Chancellor Whitney Stegall, Senior, on the celebration of

his eighty-seventh birthday, thank him for his years of service to his family, his country, his fellow man, and this State's judiciary, and wish him many more years of continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.